

Page 2, above the paragraph beginning at line 23, insert the following heading:

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--SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION--.

Page 5, above the paragraph beginning at line 25, insert the following heading:

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--BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS--.

Page 6, above the paragraph beginning at line 11, insert the following heading:

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--DETAILED DISCUSSION OF EMBODIMENTS--.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please add claims 6-18 as follows.

--6. (New) A method for the vacuum packaging of articles including at least the steps of:

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creating a plurality of ¹⁸recesses ¹²in a backing board; positioning at least one ¹⁰article on the backing board; placing a ²⁰film substantially over the at least one article; and using a ^{col. 4; LN. 27-32}vacuum packaging machine to substantially package the at least one article, the at least one article being situated between the backing board and the film, wherein the thickness of the backing board is at least 2mm, F. 1-3

the method being characterised by applying a bonding agent adapted to cause the

9 film to bond with said backing board to the backing board and by preventing the film from bonding with the backing board in a region adjacent to and extending around the or each article. F. 1-7

7. (New) A method in Claim 6, wherein the bonding agent is air dried before the film is bonded to the backing board. *col. 4; IN. 27-32*

8. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 6, comprising heating the film to cause the film to bond with the backing board. *via oven over 30*

9. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 6, comprising heating the film and *F. 3; col. 1; IN. 57-62* applying suction to a face of the backing board opposite the article(s), substantially simultaneously so that the bonding agent causes the film to bond with the backing board around ~~the~~ or each article to substantially seal in ~~the~~ or each article. *F. 5-7*

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10. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 6, wherein the step of preventing the film from bonding with the backing board is achieved by applying the bonding agent to only part of the surface of the backing board. *F. 283; via holes in back of the board.*

11. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 10, wherein the bonding agent is not applied to a region where an article is to be positioned, said region being greater than a corresponding cross section of the article. *F. 2*

12. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 6, wherein the step of preventing the film from bonding with the backing board is achieved by masking the bonding agent in those regions where the film is not to bond with the backing board. *F. 2*

13. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 6, comprising applying an ink to the backing board. *(via .16; col. 3; IN 72 & 73)*

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14. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 6, wherein ink is applied to the surface of the backing board to which bonding agent has been applied, the bonding agent having been allowed to dry before the ink is applied, the ink being applied to the areas of the backing board on which the or each article is intended to be placed. F. 2

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15. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 14, wherein the ink is applied to the backing board by printing means so as to provide the backing board with the shape of the or each article superimposed in ink thereupon, the or each superimposed ink shape being greater in area than a corresponding cross-section of the associated article.

16. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 15, wherein digital photography is used in the printing of the shape(s) on the backing board.

17. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 6, wherein the recesses are created on the backing board by punching holes at least part way thereinto.

18. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 6, wherein the recesses are created before the application of the bonding agent.--
